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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Subject: "More about Canning". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Canning questions are coming thick and fast these days. At the Bureau of Home Economics fifty or more letters come in every day asking questions about home canning. This seems to be a big year for putting up the surplus from the home garden and orchard.

So I'm going to pass on to you today some information on canning vegetables from the canning specialists.

In the first place, let's discuss the question of canning in the steam pressure canner. Is it necessary to can vegetables under pressure? Or can you use the hot water bath method for vegetables just as safely? The canning specialists say very decidedly that for all the common vegetables, except tomatoes, processing in the steam pressure canner is the only safe method.

"Suppose you have no steam pressure canner, then what do you do?" one letter-writer inquired.

Then don't can the non-acid vegetables. Preserve them in some other way such as drying or pickling. If this year it is more important than ever to put up foods for winter use because there's a scarcity of cash to buy commercial products, then isn't it equally important to use methods that will prevent spoilage and insure safe, fine-flavored foods.

If you ask the specialists why they believe so strongly that corn and beans and practically all the vegetables except tomatoes need this processing under steam pressure, here's how they will answer:

"Beans and corn and most other vegetables contain very little acid. They have a firm texture and some are very starchy, into the bargain. Therefore, heat does not penetrate these nonacid vegetables rapidly and some of the more troublesome bacteria in them are very difficult to destroy in a reasonable time, unless you use a temperature higher than that of boiling water for the processing. A practical, convenient way to get a temperature higher than 212 degrees F. is by holding steam under pressure in one of the cookers or canners manufactured for the purpose. So, after repeated experiments in home canning, backed up by bacteriological tests on home canned foods that have been stored, the Bureau of Home Economics recommends only the steam pressure method for the non-acid vegetables. Almost invariably when we get letters saying that so many jars of vegetables have spoiled and describing how they were put up, we'll find that they weren't processed long enough at high enough temperature."

Here's another very frequent question: "Is the canning method the same when you are using tin cans and when you are canning in glass jars?"

Answer: Yes, the method is the same, in general. Heat the vegetables in an open kettle and pack them boiling hot into the containers. Then seal the tin cans immediately with the sealing machine that comes for the purpose. Seal glass jars only partially. Then, immediately put the cans or jars, packed with the hot food into the steam pressure canner for processing.

But when the processing is over leave the glass jars in the canner until the pressure gauge reaches zero. Then open the petcock gradually so there is no sudden outrush of steam. Too sudden reduction in pressure of the steam surrounding glass jars will draw the liquid out of the jars. When the smaller-sized tin cans are used, allow the steam to escape at the end of processing. Remove the cans and cool them in running water.

Is it economy to use up the poorer, less perfect vegetables in canning and save the best ones to eat fresh?

No, say the specialists. The flavor and keeping quality of canned vegetables is greatly influenced by the freshness and quality of the raw foods. Canning doesn't improve the quality. You can't get first-class canned vegetables unless you have good ones at the start. Take corn, for example. The ideal way to can sweet corn is within 2 hours after it is picked. For, as soon as an ear of corn is broken from its stalk, the sugar in the kernels begins to turn to starch. So as soon as you shuck the corn and remove the silk, cut the kernels from the cob. Weigh the cut corn. Add half as much boiling water as you have corn. And heat quickly to boiling. Pack the hot corn into the containers ready for processing.

Let me add a warning if you are using tin cans. Be sure to get the special C enameled tin cans for corn, and use none larger than No. 2 size. Corn is one of the hardest of all vegetables to process.. In fact, drying is oftentimes a better method of preserving sweet corn than canning. Dried sweet corn has a flavor all its own and it takes up little storage space.

By the way, if any of you want directions for drying corn, we can send them. And if you want a reliable bulletin on the "Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables," send five cents to the Superintendent of Documents at the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. Ask for Farmers' Bulletin 1471-F.

I've had two requests for a recipe for peach butter. By the way, fruit butter is one very good means of using up the culls or the less perfect fruits. The perfect products are the ones for canning.

Here's the way you make peach butter. Wait just one second until Arabella finds her pencil. There. Everybody ready? All right.

Put the peaches in a wire basket and dip them in boiling water a few seconds or until the skin slips. Test by raising the fruit out of the water and rubbing the skin between the fingers. Now dip the peaches into cold water, peel and pit them. Well-ripened freestone varieties seem to be best for butter.

Mash the pulp and cook it in its own juice without adding water. If it is rather coarse, put it through a colander or coarse wire sieve to make a butter of fine texture. To each pound of pulp add 1/2 pound of sugar. Or to each measure of pulp, use 1/2 measure of sugar. Cook rapidly and stir constantly until the product is of the desired thickness. Stirring prevents burning on

the bottom of the pan as fruit butter is likely to do. An asbestos mat also helps prevent burning. You can add the sugar before or after cooking, as you please. Cinnamon, ginger and allspice added in very small quantities at the beginning of the cooking, give a good flavor. To add to the flavor, drop in the meats of several small pits, either whole or sliced.

While the butter is still hot, pack it in sterilized jars or glasses with tight-fitting tops and sterilize, as you do apple butter, or cover the top with hot melted paraffin.

Some time ago we discussed canning tomatoes. But I'm glad to give the directions again for those listeners who have written for them.

Select firm, ripe tomatoes of uniform shape and medium size. Avoid tomatoes that are overripe or any with decayed or spotted parts. Put the tomatoes in trays or shallow layers in wire baskets and dip them in boiling water for about a minute. Then plunge them into cold water for an instant. Drain at once, core and peel promptly. Pack these peeled tomatoes into jars or cans. Yes, pack them as closely as you can. Fill the jars with a thick tomato sauce or with the juice of other tomatoes. Season with 1 teaspoon of salt per quart. Process quart and pint glass jars for 45 minutes in boiling water. If you are canning in tin, process No. 2 and No. 3 sanitary or R enameled tin cans for 35 minutes.

Tomatoes are too valuable to go to waste in the garden. They add so much flavor and color to winter meals. And they add so much to the health of the family. Beside, they are easy to put up for winter, to can straight or or as juice or to make into catsup, chili sauce or soup mixtures.

Tomorrow: Taking out ink spots, and a menu for Sunday dinner.